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DP/PROJECTS/7469

ENGLISH

APPROVAL OF UNDP ASSISTANCE TO A PROJECT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

IPF:(1992-96) $39 636 000

(YEM/92/G31) - Protection of Marine Eco-systems of the Red Sea Coast

Date of approval by the AC:[1/]	7 April 1993
Expected duration:	Three years
Proposed executing agency:	Government
Government implementing agency:	Ministry of Fish Wealth
Proposed UNDP contribution:	$2 800 000 Source of funds: GEF
Total UNDP budget:	$2 800 000

Project background

The Red Sea coast of the Republic of Yemen extends for about 450 km. to the North from Bab el Mandeb. Aden, with its substantial fisheries and local centres of marine science, lies 100 km. east of this point. The importance to Yemen of the Red Sea marine environment is substantial. Life and development remain firmly based on its renewable natural resources; and for the coastal people of the Red Sea, these resources which derive from its high biodiversity and productivity, can in many cases only be sustained, if the biodiversity is maintained and if the waters are more effectively protected from pollution. Major parts of the Yemen Red Sea environment are poorly known. This has important consequences for this project design, especially in areas of pollution monitoring and providing protection to critical habitats. Brief biological surveys of about 100 sites in the nearshore Red Sea environment of Yemen conducted in 1985 and 1991, constitute almost the only existing source of biological data for this area. Most coral reef and seagrass occurs in the southern part of the coast where biodiversity is likely to be greatest. Offshore, patch reefs and other reefs occur throughout the Yemen Red Sea. These are almost completely unstudied, although, potentially, they are likely to provide great biodiversity and substantial shallow breeding and feeding grounds for fish.

Most marine pollution in the region comes from shipping (oil and tar). Also, some valuable habitants have been damaged by landfill. The lack of monitoring of the coast and the lack of adequate background marine biological data has made it relatively simple for shipping companies to deliberately seek out these waters for polluting activities such as tank cleaning. Recently, there are raising concerns that land-based sources of pollution such as sediment, heavy metal, pesticide and fertilizer run off, might pose problems. Fisheries are important for Yemen's economy, as fish is the country's second most important source of protein. Artisanal fisheries of Yemen seas are expanding with the rise in coastal population; and there are plans to increase commercial fishing despite the general lack of knowledge about resources, ergo sustainable catch levels. For the Red Sea, pollution

[1/] This Fact Sheet reflects the status of the project/revision at the time it was approved by the Action Committee; modifications to the project/revision may have occurred subsequently.

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control and marine habitat protection are both essential if fish catches from these waters are to be sustainable. There is some evidence that catches from the Yemen Red Sea are already close to the maximum sustainable level, but these Red Sea marine resources now face new pressures from the large, local increase in population from returnees from other Gulf States following the 1991 war. Presently, reported Red Sea catches for pelagic fish are 9,500 tonnes, against a possible maximum sustainable level of 10 to 20,000 tonnes. Demersal fisheries, which are closely linked to the health of shallow habitats are 4,000 tonnes, against a possible maximum level of 5,000 tonnes. Two major problems exist with these figures. Firstly, the reported catch is probably too low, and secondly, there is little useful data on which to base estimates of what catch level is sustainable. Under the circumstances, there is a quite real risk that even relatively small population increases on the Red Sea coast or localized damage to spawning grounds could quickly lead to depletion of the fish resource and shallow water habitats, as fishing activities intensify to compensate for declining catches.

Description of project

The project will play a key role in defining the marine resource base on Yemen (along the Red Sea coast), and in helping to avoid and resolve conflicts of use as well as avoid damage and depletion. The immediate objectives of the project are to: (a) decrease the vulnerability of the Red Sea to pollution; (b) increase the understanding of marine systems and of interaction between land and sea; and (c) provide adequate protection and appropriate management of the marine ecosystems and associated resources.

Project activities will include: (a) assessment and classification of marine habitats, offshore reefs and associated biota; (b) analysis of environmental trends, including evaluation of marine habitats which are critical to maintaining high biodiversity; (c) establishment of a database to determine the Red Sea environmental status quo and trends; and a marine environmental monitoring system for the Red Sea; (d) strengthening the capacity of national institutions to assess marine ecosystems, detect and control pollution sources before damage is caused; (e) training in environmental information collection and interpretation; (f) tropical coastal management; (g) ecosystems analysis and management; (h) environmental impact assessment (EIA) and monitoring; (i) marine environmental protection and public awareness enhancement; (j) preparation of the means to protect Yemen waters and adjacent international waters from pollution; (k) assurance of recurrent cost financing; (l) review and development of the protected area system, including assistance with preparation of management plans for EPC; (m) improved public awareness of the economic and environmental value of protected areas through educational campaigns; (n) institutional strengthening and capacity building of the Regional Environment Programme for the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) through a regional component handled by UNEP, and planning for future expansion of the Red Sea Programme using the Egypt and Yemen projects as models.

Inputs

UNDP will provide experts and consultants (43.5 work-months) training (210 work-months); a sub-contract for environmental information collection and interpretation, EIA and monitoring, protected area management, public awareness enhancement, marine environmental protection, tropical coastal management, ecosystem analysis and management; and equipment.

Financial data

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Personnel	239 800
Subcontract	1 843 900
Training	122 400
Equipment	71 000
Miscellaneous	522 900
Total	2 800 000

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